

Neal of the Navy

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "Red Mouse," "Running Fight," "Cats-paw," "Blue Buckle," etc.

Novelized from the Photo Play of the Same Name Produced by the Pathe Exchange, Inc.

Moving Pictures of each installment of "Neal of the Navy" will be shown every Friday night at the Dreamland Theatre.

SYNOPSIS.

On the day of the eruption of Mount Pelee Capt. John Hardin of the steamer Princess rescues five-year-old Annette Ilington from an open boat, but is forced to leave behind her father and his companions. Ilington is assaulted by Hernandez and Santo in a vain attempt to get papers which Ilington has managed to send aboard the Princess with his daughter, papers proving his title to and telling the whereabouts of the lost island of Cinnabar. Ilington's injury causes his mind to become a blank. Thirteen years elapse. Hernandez, now an opium smuggler, with Ponto, Inez, a female accomplice, and the mindless brute that once was Ilington, come to Seaport, where the widow of Captain Hardin is living with her son Neal and Annette Ilington, and plot to steal the papers left to Annette by her father. Neal tries for admission to the Naval academy, but through the treachery of Joey Welcher is defeated by Joey and disgraced. Neal enlists in the navy. Inez sets a trap for Joey and the conspirators get him in their power. In a struggle for possession of the map Hernandez, Annette and Neal each secure a portion. Annette sails on the Coronado in search of her father. In Martinique Annette and Neal are captured, but are rescued by a sponge diver. Inez forges identification papers for herself as Annette. In an insurrection Neal and Annette are again captured, carried to the Sun City and Annette is offered as a sacrifice to the sun god. They are rescued by friends from the Albany. Landed in Tortuga, Annette and Neal are captured and exposed to yellow fever infection by Hernandez, but are rescued by sailors from the Albany. Inez tries to rob Annette and escapes. On her way to Chantillo Annette is captured. Neal is promoted and leads a party of transferred men toward Chantillo, but is caught in a train wreck on the way. Hernandez and Inez present the false identification papers to Brother Anselmo at Santa Maria mission. Ponto is caught and killed in his own trap, set for Annette.

TWELFTH INSTALLMENT

(Continued from last issue)

Swiftly—and unnoticed—he pushed the thorny burr under the saddle, next to the pony's skin. Then he slouched away in the general direction of the bar.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Dangerous Connection.

There are few drivers of a high-power car who permit themselves restraint upon an open road. But the machine that crept along the avenue in this sparsely settled portion of suburban Los Angeles seemed almost crippled. Everything passed it—even horse-drawn vehicles.

And one horse in particular kept always on ahead. This horse was Annette Ilington's.

There were four people in this car—and three of them were waiting for the inevitable to happen. They crept on and on—always two hundred yards behind.

"Ah!" exclaimed Hernandez finally. "It eats in."

He was quite right. Suddenly the horse ahead swerved sharply to one side, violently shook its head and neck—leaped frantically into the air, and then, with a violent burst of speed, tore down the road like fire.

Hernandez increased his speed to twenty miles—to twenty-five—but the horse tore on before him. Annette was riding like the wind—but she had lost control.

Joe, in the car behind, leaped to his feet and tried to force his way from the car. "Let me out," he cried, struggling. "I got her into this, and I'll get her out."

Hernandez turned to the brute. "Hold him," he commanded. And the brute obeyed.

Inez Castro now was on her feet. "Look—look—look," she cried, "the horse is mad—he'll kill her—look—ah—ah—"

It was all over. In one final burst of frenzy the horse had leaped high in the air, and come down on all fours, not on the solid road, but in the ditch. Annette was flung violently from her seat—and struck the ground with a thud. The horse, freed of his burden, sped on—up the road—sped on.

Hernandez stopped his car. Joe leaped out and ran to Annette. "She's killed," he said.

Hernandez followed him. "If so, we cannot help it," he returned calmly.

"If she's killed, I did it, you black-guard," cried Joe, remorsefully.

Inez bent over the girl. "She's not dead," she said, "she's very much live. She's only stunned."

Hernandez motioned to the brute. "Carry her to the car," he commanded. And the brute again obeyed.

"Now, slowly," commanded Inez of Hernandez, "until I revive the girl."

They were in open country now—the community was but sparsely settled. Hernandez glanced warily from side to side.

"We must make haste," he mused, taking a grass-grown road to the right.

He stopped the car before a house. It was an ordinary dwelling. There was no sign of life about it. The grass in the dooryard was a foot high. Everything appeared unkempt. But in the parlor window was a sign: To let, furnished. Hernandez stepped into the dooryard and peered into the windows.

"We'll let it furnished—free—for a short time," he said.

He forced the door and entered.

"All the comforts of home," he said, smiling, "fetch in the girl."

Back in the city, Neal, off duty once again, sought Annette at her hotel.

"She's gone again—alone," said Mrs. Hardin, "she would go. She's so restless she couldn't sit still."

Neal smiled. He was not worried. He got a saddle horse and started off in the direction taken by Annette.

Back in the deserted furnished house, Hernandez still looked about him.

"We can hide here till doomsday," he laughed, "running water, too. Look here. Everything but food—everything. Look—yonder on the mantel—even pen and ink. This place was meant for us." He bowed low. "Ah, my charming friend Senorita Ilington," he said to Annette who had recovered consciousness and was staring about her in astonishment, "you have had a long sleep—and pleasant dreams I hope."

He drew down the shades and switched on the light.

"See," he added, "you have slept till evening—pretty sluggish. And how is your good health. No bones broken. That is well."

Annette did not answer. Suddenly she leaped to her feet.

"Joe," she cried, "Joe Welcher—you here?"

"Yes," returned Hernandez, again bowing, "Joe is here—he has always been here—with us. Joe is our good friend. We owe him much—much."

He turned a sneering smile on Welcher. Annette uttered an exclamation.

"Joe—Joe," she cried, "is it—true?"

Joe turned away—his chest heaving, his eyes upon the floor. "Aw, I'm no good," he muttered.

"Never mind, Joe, fair one," said Hernandez, taking from his pocket a legal document already carefully prepared, "we have business at hand. This document—you should really know what it contains. It is in proper shape, I assure you. A bit soiled perhaps, from long disuse in my breast pocket—but well worded. Look—it is complete. It is even acknowledged before a United States consul in Central America—acknowledged by you, fair one."

"It is not," snapped Annette.

"Fair Inez here," went on Hernandez, "signed it Annette Ilington—the consul was quite satisfied that she was you. But—I have erased her signature—she lacks the cleverness called forgery. And your signature may be on record somewhere—who knows. Comparisons are odious. Let us therefore be complete. Take in hand a pen, my pretty. Sign your name, over this erasure—opposite this seal."

"I'll never sign," returned Annette.

"You will sign," said Hernandez evenly, "and you will hand over to us all the evidence you have upon your person. Sign."

"No," said Annette.

"Well and good," went on Hernandez in honeyed accents. "Beast—hold her firm. Disobey and the lash for yours." Hernandez took from his coat pocket a piece of cord. He tied the ends together.

Despite her struggles he fitted this noose-like cord over Annette's head and thrust into it a piece of wood. Then he began to twist.

"Tell me when you've had enough," he said.

Like a stone from a catapult Joe Welcher hurled himself across the room and was upon Hernandez in a flash. Under the assault Hernandez retreated violently to the wall, striking his head against the mantel.

"Are you crazy, you—worm?" cried Hernandez with a snarl.

"I've—turned," snarled Joe in return.

Without waiting for breath he flung himself once more at Hernandez.

"Help!" cried Hernandez. "Inez—tackle this mosquito."

Inez was a valuable ally. She attacked Joe from the rear, and her assault was effectual. Her onslaught was so severe that it caused Joe to retreat. He did retreat until he faced them both.

"Now," said Hernandez. And both descended upon him. Joe was ready for them. He seized a chair and whirled it about his head—frenzy lending him violence and strength.

He glanced cautiously around a corner.

"Come on!" he cried, "all three of you at once!"

With one wild final swing he brought the chair crashing down on Hernandez's head. No, not on Hernandez's head. It fell short of that, but crashed on something else—the chandelier above Hernandez's head.

There was a ripping, tearing, cracking sound—and then a crash. Down came the chandelier in a tangled heap upon the floor.

For one instant there was a cessation of hostilities. The shades were down—the lights extinguished—the room plunged into semi-darkness.

Annette watched in affright. Suddenly a strange, familiar odor assailed her nostrils.

"Stop—stop!" she cried.

But none heeded her. The brute still held her fast. And Joe, in his new and ungovernable frenzy, was once more at it with the chair, clearing a space about him on the floor, driving Inez and Hernandez before him into one corner after another.

His chair whirling, touched a live wire—from which the insulation had been torn. The wire, recoiling from the blow, struck a piece of disjointed gas pipe still clinging to the ceiling.

Then—fizz—a spark—a multitude of sparks. A pause—a second's pause.

And then the whole room, with a mighty roar, burst itself out into the open air.

A horseman, speeding down the straight road, heard the boom. He saw the explosion. He spurred his horse. He reached the wayside late.

Joe Welcher, his head cut and bleeding, was the first to revive. His remorseful frenzy still lent him strength and energy. He sprang to his feet—looked for Annette. He noticed nothing else—saw that the room was wrecked.

He found Annette, picked her up and carried her without. She was stunned, but practically unhurt. But Joe didn't know all this. He had

killed her—he must bring her to life again.

With her in his arms he started up the lane—whither he knew not.

Suddenly, in the distance, he saw Neal—on horseback. Welcher broke into a run toward his foster brother.

"She—she lives," said Joe thickly, "at any rate—you can tell her—tell mother—tell yourself—that I brought her back—to life. That pays up—pays up—for—"

He fell prone upon the ground.

Neal knelt by his side. "Gone," he said, taking off his hat, "gone, Annette."

"We'll forget everything," she answered sobbing, "except that he saved me—that he died a hero—a real hero—at the last!"

CHAPTER LIV.

A Piece of Steel.

Neal's first duty was toward Annette—his second toward Joe. He carried Joe tenderly to the side of the road and left him there, covered with green boughs. Then he lifted Annette upon his steed and set off for help. It took time to find a surgeon—time to get a car.

Meantime things happened at the furnished house—the house so swiftly and violently unfurnished by its interloping tenants.

Inside the room nothing but a mass of wreckage was to be seen. But slowly, painfully, impelled by some unseen force, this mass of wreckage slowly rose. Beneath it some giant writhed and wriggled.

Finally a head appeared—the brute's head.

He looked about the room. Nothing was to be seen. He peered into the depths from which he had just emerged. Then suddenly he saw something.

Seeing—he worked away like mad.

Inside of ten minutes, Inez, in a stoop, was staring at the brute from one side of the room—Hernandez from the other.

Hernandez shook the lethargy from him. He crawled to Inez.

"Up—up," he cried, tugging at her. "We have no time to lose. Come on, you beast—come on."

Seizing them both, tearing at them frantically, like mad, he sped with them toward a cluster of trees on the other side of the road.

In the midst of this dense growth he had hidden his machine.

Panting with frenzy, his glance ever over his shoulder, he forced them into the car, sprang to the wheel, threw in the clutch, and was off.

It was three days later, on the high seas, that Hernandez—his other two companions well hidden in the hold—stole out of the companion way of a fruit steamer bound for the southern seas.

He glanced cautiously around a corner.

The first figure that met his sight was Neal Hardin—an ensign in the navy.

"What's he doing here?" demanded Hernandez of himself.

He watched warily. What he saw disturbed him.

Neal was giving orders to the captain of the ship.

Hernandez looked about him. Suddenly he darted forward, stooped, and picked up something from the floor.

"What is it?" queried Inez.

"A piece of steel," he said.

That night, well muffled, he stole toward the compass, and concealed his piece of steel where it would do the most good—or most harm, as you prefer. No one saw him—no one knew.

But on his return, turning a corner, he ran full tilt into Ensign Neal Hardin himself. Neal sprang upon the muffled figure and tore the enveloping cloak from Hernandez's grasp.

"You," cried Neal, leaping for Hernandez. "I've got you now."

They struggled like tigers, but Neal took no chances. This was no test bout. He wanted to make sure of his man. He called for help. Help came. A dozen men pounced upon Hernandez.

When he was safely chained Neal rose to his feet.

"We've got him," said Neal briefly.

He gave an order. "Search the ship," he said.

The ship was searched, and within the next quarter of an hour Inez and the brute, each in the clutch of many powerful men, came into view on deck.

(Continued on page 5.)

NOTICE.

Dr. W. G. Howe has moved his dental office to the Wilson building. 15 ft

O. A. C.

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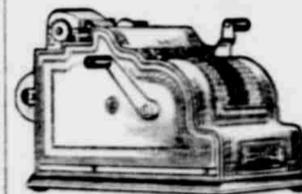
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He Seized a Chair and Whirled It About His Head.